





# THE MAINE FARMER: AN

Augusta, Thursday, Sept. 25, 1862.

Notice.  
Mr. Jas. Sturgis will call upon subscribers to the Farmer in the Province of Nova Scotia, during the month of September and October.

## Something about Aerolites.

A part of the fragment of an aerolite found in Chester township, Iowa, and handed us by Mr. Geo. Bigelow, of Skowhegan, has been forwarded to Prof. Shepard of Yale College, who has a large collection of them and who is better acquainted with their history and composition than any other person in our country, and the remainder has been deposited in the State Cabinet, at the State House. We hope to receive from Prof. S. some notes respecting the specimen forwarded him, but meanwhile the following general outline is given.

The name—*aerolite*—is derived from two Greek words, signifying "stones that fall from the air," but their composition differs greatly from that of any other substances, although iron seems to be the chief ingredient, usually forming from 85 to 90 per cent of their weight. In addition to iron, they contain nickel, copper, tin, magnesium, aluminum and other metals in very small proportions, and also sulphur, carbon, silica, phosphorus, oxygen and hydrogen; but from the fact that iron is the principal metal found in their formation, these aerolites are frequently called meteoric iron.

Their general appearance, like the one in question, somewhat resembles malleable iron, being black on the outside and of a greyish white within. All of them thus far discovered, are found to considerably affect the magnetic needle. There seems to be a remarkably similar appearance in their composition, so much so that learned men have always assigned to them a common origin. Although no new elements are found in them, yet differing as they do in their composition from anything belonging to the earth and considering the manner in which they make their appearance upon our planet, has led to the supposition that their formation belongs to some other body than the earth. Their first appearance is an instantaneous one, surrounded with a bright light, rushing through the air in an oblique direction and with immense rapidity towards the earth. They shine with great splendor and explode with a loud report, sometimes supposed to be at an elevation of from thirty to forty miles above the surface of the earth. They are often found to bury themselves in the earth to a considerable depth, and cannot be handled for some time after their descent on account of the mass being in a hot state.

There are many theories in regard to the source from whence these aerolites proceed. One is that they are meteors, formed in the atmosphere by the aggregation of their particles, somewhat in the manner in which rain and hail are formed; but this is not now regarded as plausible; because leaving unexplained the sources whence the vapors are formed, as none of them have ever been detected in the atmosphere, a question arises how, if formed, the velocity which they carry has been given them. Another theory is that of the astronomer Laplace, that they belonged to the moon and were hurled from its volcanoes with such mighty force as to bring them to the surface of the earth's surface. He estimated that a body projected from the moon with a velocity of 1771 feet the first second (this velocity being less than four times that of a cannon ball) would reach our earth in about 24 days. This theory, however, has been objected to by many eminent astronomers, on the ground that the actual velocity of the meteors is greater than they could have received from any forces possessed by the moon, and that if this work of sending forth from its volcanoes such numberless aerolites in size until it is itself reduced to a large sized meteor, finally exploding like the rest. Yet many consider it as by no means improbable that solid particles may be sent from the volcanoes of the moon with such force as to be hurled beyond the range of its own attraction and coming within the sphere of the earth's attraction are brought towards it. However, we cannot consider this as taking a rather limited view of the matter, as there is a remarkable analogy between these bodies and others that are known to be floating in space among the other planets and without the limits of our solar system, such as the asteroids which have been discovered between Jupiter and Mars. There is yet another theory respecting them which originated with a German astronomer about 1794, which is that these bodies are small planets or parts of planets, in motion through space, and that on coming within the atmosphere of our planet, lose their momentum and fall to the earth. But this theory fails to give an explanation of the heat of these bodies as they pass through our atmosphere, which cannot be accounted for on the idea of the compression of the air caused by their rapid motion, and this theory finds but little favor among scientific men.

These aerolites were known to the ancients and were held in great reverence by them. They are spoken of by Pliny, Livy, Plutarch and other ancient writers. They have been met with in all parts of the globe, and some of them are of immense size. In South America there is one calculated to weigh 30,000 lbs., and there is one in the cabinet of Yale College, found near the Red River, in Arkansas, which weighs 1,635 lbs., and in Normandy, in northern France, a large one fell in the year 1803, which was scattered over an immense tract of land, from which over two thousand fragments were gathered, the largest weighing seventeen pounds. But we leave for the present this interesting subject.

CALIFORNIA WINES. The wines of California have obtained a wide celebrity for their unquested purity and rich and delicate flavor, rivaling the best and most celebrated European vintages in quality and cheapness. The culture of the grape in California has been attended with extraordinary success. In 1853 the city of Los Angeles alone contained one million six hundred and fifty thousand vines, and produced about seventy-five thousand gallons of wine. Since that time the production has been immensely increased, and has become one of the most important industrial interests of the State. Messrs. Perkins, Stern & Co., of New York and Boston, are the principal importers and dealers in Los Angeles wines, which are regarded as superior in flavor and purity to any others produced in California. They have been almost exclusively adopted for medicinal purposes in our army hospitals, and are extensively used in the practice of many of our most distinguished physicians. These wines are for sale by Chas. F. Potter of this city, where their superior excellence for family and medicinal purposes can be tested.

MAINTAINING EGGS. We don't mean by this that the Mammoth eggs, but there is a Bremen goose belonging to Mr. Amos H. Bishop, of Bishop's Hill, in Leeds, that does, and "suffice" big ones too. We examined a couple which the aforesaid goose laid this fall, one of which girthed 9 by 12, and weighed three-quarters of a pound. Can Ephraim beat that?

The Farmington Patriot states that Messrs. R. Cutler, H. Belcher, and T. F. Belcher, of Farmington, and Messrs. Curtis & Howes, of New Sharon, sold to a Philadelphia firm last week, one hundred thousand pounds of wool at the unprecedented price of 65 cents per lb. Franklin County carries her wool to a good market.

## THE MAINE FARMER: AN

The War News of the Week.  
In a despatch to Gen. Halleck dated the morning of Friday, the 19th inst., from his headquarters on the north bank of Potomac river, Gen. McClellan announces the result of the brief but eventful campaign in Maryland in the following comprehensive terms: "Our victory is complete! The enemy is driven back into Virginia! Maryland and Pennsylvania are now safe!"

The battle of South Mountain near Middle-town was fought on Sunday, the 14th inst., resulting in a complete victory for our forces, the enemy being driven from a position of great strength after a desperate resistance, and compelled to fall back in the direction of the Potomac river. Antietam Creek near Sharpsburg, was the scene of the next battle. Closely and vigorously followed up by Gen. McClellan the rebels chose an advantageous position and awaited the attack. The battle commenced at 5 o'clock on the morning of Wednesday and continued without cessation until 7 at night, the entire strength of both armies being engaged. It is represented as the greatest as to numbers engaged and the most obstinately contested battle of the war. The immediate results of the day's fighting were somewhat indecisive, our right and center having driven the enemy from his position, while our left after gaining some advantages was obliged to relinquish them and fall back leaving the enemy in possession. The losses on both sides were very large.

The next day the two armies rested on their arms, being engaged by mutual consent in the burial of the dead. It was expected that the contest would be renewed on Friday morning, but during Thursday night the enemy quietly retreated, and by daylight, with the exception of a small rear guard, had safely crossed the Potomac by several ferries near Shepherdstown. Pursuit was made by Gen. Pleasanton with his cavalry, who succeeded only in picking up a few stragglers. Some skirmishing took place during Friday and Saturday across the river, the main body of the rebel army probably pushing up the Shenandoah Valley towards Winchester, making the best of his way to Gordonsville.

The surrender of Harper's Ferry to Stonewall Jackson on Monday morning was one of the unfortunate events of the week. It was retaken by Gen. Burnside on Tuesday, but too late to be of service in preventing the concentration of the rebel forces at Sharpsburg, and their safe retreat across the Potomac.

Gen. Pope and McDowell. Gen. Pope has been assigned to the Department of the North-west, and is now engaged in suppressing the Indian hostilities in Minnesota. Notwithstanding the popular clamor of which he has been made the victim, in consequence of the unsuccessful results of his recent campaign in Virginia—a result which is mainly due, probably to the jealousy of certain generals who were indisposed to render him cordial and prompt support when he most needed their aid—the government still feels entire confidence in his capacity and energy. Gen. Halleck declares that Gen. Pope made no military mistake through the whole campaign of the Rappahannock, to the defense of Washington. The retreat was skillfully and successfully accomplished against overwhelming odds, and no other general with the same limited means, and in the face of similar difficulties, could probably have done better.

Gen. McDowell has also been violently denounced, not only for incapacity, but he is charged with treacherous correspondence with the enemy. There can be no doubt that he has failed to secure the good will and confidence of his soldiers and officers, and that the feeling against him in the army is so strong that the interests of the service have demanded his transfer to another command, but not the slightest evidence yet appears to indicate in his conduct as a patriot and a soldier. Gen. Pope in his official report bears the highest testimony to his gallantry, skill and courage during the retreat to Washington. The Washington Star of Sept. 12th, states that "every general officer serving under Pope in the latter's brief campaign, unite in emphatically repudiating all aspersions on Gen. McDowell's loyalty, courage, or efficiency during the campaign." Gen. McDowell, in a frank and high-toned letter to the President demands a court of inquiry for the investigation of all charges or allegations in reference to his conduct while in command.

WHITMAN'S CIDER MILL. One of the best portable cider mills now to be had is Whitman's. Improved, which you will see advertised in our columns. We examined one of them the other day, and tried our hand at the crank. It goes easily, and works efficiently. The crusher and grater is of solid iron, and will grind a bushel of apples in a minute when turned at top speed. It can be turned by hand, but at the same time is sufficiently strong and stout to be turned by horse power, merely by passing a band from the pulley of the horse power to the balance wheel of the mill. The pressure is obtained by means of an iron screw, at the end of which is the following fitting into a grating cylindrical vat.

Every man who has an orchard will find this mill an exceedingly convenient appendage to it. It will take up but little room and enable you to crush your refuse apples into cider or vinegar, and by its use you can make as little or as much as you please, from a pint to a hoghead. These mills are made strong and durable, and with common care will last a life time.

His wine mill is a miniature edition of the other, and is a very convenient apparatus in a neighborhood, enabling those who wish to crush and press anything of which may make domestic wines, such as currants and other berries and fruits, and can thus be made useful in a great variety of ways. One of each of these mills should be had in every neighborhood of fruit-growers.

CROPS IN PISCATAQUIS CO. Lyman Lee, Esq., of Foxcroft, member of the Board of Agriculture from Piscataquis Co., writes us under date of Sept. 22nd as follows: "The crops in this county are on the whole, more than an average. The grain crop greatly exceeds the crop of last year. Wheat was particularly good, and has done remarkably well; nearly or quite enough has been raised to supply the county with bread for the year to come, having had crop bids for a heavy yield, having had well as yet to check its maturing. The wheat crop in Piscataquis will be one-third or one-half less than last year. They did not come up well after planting, and for the last ten days they have all rusted down, while the potatoes appear more or less diseased. Fruit is very abundant."

CORRECTION. In our last week's issue, in a notice of the garden of Dr. A. Fairbanks, we stated that Mr. F. was formerly Secretary of the State Agricultural Society. This is a mistake. Mr. F. was Secretary of the "Maine Pomological and Horticultural Society."

Religious services were conducted at Camp E. D. Keyes, on Sunday afternoon last, by Rev. W. A. Dillingham, of Sidney. The Augusta Citizens' Band were also in attendance.

The telegraph extension to Skowhegan is about completed, and is probably now in working order.

## AGRICULTURAL AND FAMILY

For the Maine Farmer.

Why do Big Guns Burst?  
MR. EDITOR:—If your readers have a wish to speculate upon the above subject and suggest remedies, perhaps the following information from you would be agreeable:—What is the relative diameter of our large guns compared with those of small calibre? And would best operate differently upon guns of different size, providing that the rapidity of discharges be diminished as the size of the gun increases? I have an impression also that they do not increase the size of the gun in proportion to the increased size of the bore, all things considered, though I confess that I do not know.

If one-fourth part of the diameter of a gun, twelve inches thick at the breech, would be a proper allowance for the bore, then, I take it, a gun of twelve-inch bore should be sixteen feet nine inches diameter; but if one-fourth part of the diameter would be a proper allowance for the bore of a six-inch gun, which I suppose to be the fact, then a twelve-inch gun should be eight feet six inches diameter, taking into account the difference of inertia in the balls and the difference of surface exposed to the strain.

We all know that heat does weaken metals and that it has a tendency to burst guns by unequal expansion, as Mr. Ward says, and I think it has its greatest effect by heating the center of the solid breech and that the breech would not be split by the direct strain in the chamber or by the average power of the rifled barrel, without this expansion, and that a non-conducting plate in the bottom of the chamber would be a great relief. That the motion of the forward part of the gun, in case of an expansion, compared with that of the ball, is any evidence that the gun was not burst by the pressure of the blast, as Mr. Ward says, I think is a mistake, for there is no power to give motion to said part until the remaining part of the gun has opened so as to leave its fractured end exposed to the pressure of the blast. Of course the shot would be off on its way while the chase was pitching after it.

I do not, Mr. Editor, think it is of much consequence what people fight with, if they will fight, if it is muffled fists; but it is to be regretted that our ordnance department should put the country to so much expense to commit suicide, and good suggestions are as likely to come from the humbler of your readers as from any other source.

Respectfully yours, J.

An interesting question proposes itself in connection with this subject, and we would be glad to have our scientific friends give us their views upon it.

THE CAPTURE OF LONGSTREET'S AMMUNITION TRAIN. One of the most brilliant and fortunate events connected with the campaign in Maryland, was the capture of the rebel Gen. Longstreet's ammunition train, consisting of one hundred wagons, by a cavalry force of 1000 men under Col. Davis, which had cut their way through the enemy's lines at Harper's Ferry on the Sunday night previous to their surrender. The particulars of the affair are thus related by a correspondent: "Sunday evening Col. Miles being ignorant of what was taking place in the direction of Frederick, gave directions to the 12th Illinois, 8th New York, four companies of 3d Maryland, and a squadron of the 1st Rhode Island, in all about sixteen hundred men, to march out on their march towards Sharpsburg. The cavalcade was two miles long. At Sharpsburg they were fired upon by the rebel pickets, who immediately fled on giving the alarm, frightened by the sudden appearance of such a force, coming they knew not from whence. Crossing Sharpsburg they came upon level lands, but avoided the roads and struck through farms and cornfields towards Hagerstown, crossing the Hagerstown and Williamsport Turnpike about the middle of the night, and then, by a circuitous route, crossed the Potomac bridge, taking unfrequented roads and circuitous paths among the mountains towards Sharpsburg. The cavalcade was two miles long. At Sharpsburg they were fired upon by the rebel pickets, who immediately fled on giving the alarm, frightened by the sudden appearance of such a force, coming they knew not from whence. Crossing Sharpsburg they came upon level lands, but avoided the roads and struck through farms and cornfields towards Hagerstown, crossing the Hagerstown and Williamsport Turnpike about the middle of the night, and then, by a circuitous route, crossed the Potomac bridge, taking unfrequented roads and circuitous paths among the mountains towards Sharpsburg. The cavalcade was two miles long. 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